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AN ESSAY UPON THE BRITISH FISHERIES:

WHEREIN

THE ERRORS OF THE SYSTEM ON WHICH THEY ARE AT PRESENT CONDUCTED, ARE POINTED OUT;

A BETTER SYSTEM IS RECOMMENDED;

AND

SUNDRY EXPERIMENTS, TENDING TO IMPROVEMENT, ARE PROPOSED.

THE WHOLE IS HUMBLY SUBMITTED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLIC.

By a CALEDONIAN FISHER.

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TO THE HONOURABLE,

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FOR

FISHERIES, MANUFACTURES,
and IMPROVEMENTS,
IN SCOTLAND,

THIS ESSAY

IS HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR MOST OBEDIENT,
AND MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,

JOHN ROSE.

ESSAY

UPON THE

BRITISH FISHERIES.

IT cannot fail to be matter of ſincere pleaſure to every friend of his country, to find that the FISHERIES have attracted the notice of ſundry *truly* patriotic gentlemen, who, it is ſaid, are collecting information to be laid before Parliament, for laying down proper regulations, and an improved plan, for the future encouragement and reſtoration of that valuable branch of buſineſs. As this has long been a favourite ſubject with me, I have not failed to ſeek for information where-ever there was a probability of finding it, either in reading, tradition, or the report of the preſent practice of our own and other countries; and as I look up-

on it to be the duty of every good ſubject who thinks he can give a uſeful hint, to do it at this time; this, and this only, is my motive for writing the preſent Eſſay. I find it impoſſible, however, fully to expreſs that diffidence which I feel upon the occaſion; but, without making any formal apology, ſhall only obſerve, that I was at laſt overruled, with the hope, that if theſe hints are found uſeful, they may call forth the attention of perſons of greater ability to do the ſubject more juſtice, by improving upon, and reducing them to practice: If it ſhall produce this happy effect, my ultimate aim will be attained.

By a number of paragraphs in the newſpapers, I find the expectation of the public is much on tiptoe at preſent: juſt ſo I find it was about the year 1750, from that valuable pamphlet, intitled, *The Fiſheries revived*, &c. (as lately republiſhed by Lord Dundonald), and alſo from the Journal of a gentleman who was ſent by government, in 1749, round Shetland and the weſt coaſt, to make obſervations. In theſe, ſundry uſeful rules are laid down; proper fiſhing ſtations are pointed out; much ſound argument and rational remarks are made; and a *ſcheme for carrying on the free Britiſh fiſhery recommended:* Since which, government has given more and greater bounties than perhaps ever were given by any other nation. After all, what has been done? The anſwer, in ſhort, is,

Nothing

× Wherein the Author has given the practice of the Dutch both in Cod and Herring fishing, with their orders and regulations for catching and curing them.

Nothing to the purpoſe. In fact, this branch of buſineſs, that, in the hands of the *Dutch*, has been for ages a ſource of national riches and ſtrength, and raiſed them, in a ſhort period, to ſuch a pinnacle of wealth and power, as not to find a parallel in the annals of the world; in *our* hands, with every advantage in our favour that nature could give, or can be required, has been, and ſtill remains, (ſorry am I to ſay it, but truth requires it), *a national diſgrace*. I muſt therefore conclude, much as government may be diſpoſed to do, never, no never will their efforts be found equal to the taſk of putting the fiſheries upon a regular and permanent footing, unleſs their views and meaſures are properly ſeconded by the ſpirit of the people. Rouſe then, my countrymen, from your fatal lethargy; regard the reſtoration of the fiſheries as your trueſt intereſt; and be prevailed on to lend your helping hand, by entering into the ſpirit of the trade upon proper principles! Our forefathers well knew the value of this trade, which they proſecuted with ardour, much to their own and country's advantage, in ages we eſteem much leſs enlightened than the preſent.

I muſt beg leave to give an extract from a book I have ſeen, intitled, *The intereſt of Scotland conſidered*; wherein the author ſays, "Formerly we "proſecuted the fiſhing trade for ſeveral ages with "great ſucceſs, until the civil wars in the reign of "King Charles I.; when, as before obſerved,

" the wealthy inhabitants of *Fife* (by whom
" chiefly it was carried on) were ruined. If we
" intend to do it to purpoſe, we muſt ſtill do it in
" the ſame way, by improving every natural ad-
" vantage of our ſituation. It was then managed
" by ſmall buſſes, from fifteen to thirty tons bur-
" den, with cloſe decks, and one maſt that ſtruck.
" Upon this maſt one of their nets lay drying,
" while they rode by the other put out in head,
" to catch herrings for bait, when they were at
" the cod-fiſhing; and lay thus, ſnug in the wa-
" ter, very little expoſed to the violence of the
" winds. In the beginning of March, theſe buſſes
" went to the northward, and fiſhed cod on the
" coaſt of Orkney, &c. They ſalted the fiſh in
" their holds; and when the weather was dry,
" they put them aſhore, and dried them on the
" beaches of Orkney. They returned in May to
" the frith, and waſhed out the ſalt from their
" mud-fiſh, and dried them on their beaches and
" ſtages at home, when they ſold them partly for
" home conſumpt, and partly for exportation.
" About the 8th or 10th of June they took in
" their large nets, ſalt, and caſks, and ſet out to
" the fiſhing for herrings in deep water, in the
" ſame ſeas where the Dutch and we now take
" them. So ſoon as they had catched as many as
" their ſmall holds could contain, or conveniently
" ſtow, beſide their fiſhing-equipage and ſtores,
" they run to the coaſt and put theſe aſhore, and

" took

" took in a freſh fleet of nets, with more caſks
" and ſalt, and fiſhed on to the end of July; when
" they returned home, ſhifted their nets again,
" and fiſhed acroſs the opening of the frith ſo
" long as the fiſhing-ſeaſon continued. Here they
" never failed to fiſh with ſucceſs, and gave cer-
" tain intelligence to the open boats (wherein the
" ſame perſons were ſharers) where to lay their
" nets for herrings, cloſe in with the ſhore, in
" ſhallow water. When this fiſhing was over,
" the ſame buſſes, with a freſh fleet of nets, ſailed
" to the northward, round the coaſt of Strathna-
" ver, to what we call the Lewis fiſhing, and
" there fiſhed herrings in the deep-water lochs
" upon the weſt coaſt of Sutherland, Roſs, and
" Inverneſs-ſhire, till towards Chriſtmas, and then
" returned home, and laid up their buſſes to be
" dreſſed and repaired; and thoſe employed in
" them went to the fiſhing along the coaſt in open
" boats until the month of March, and were by
" this conſtant practice the moſt expert fiſhers in
" Europe."

What a rational and proper ſyſtem was this? One may boldly venture to aſſert, that we have only to revert to this old Scots one, to eſtabliſh the moſt regular, extenſive, and permanent fiſhery in the world. How unlike is our preſent practice to the old! and how much degenerate, notwithſtanding the improvements of our anceſtors, and that of the Dutch, (who I have every

reaſon

reaſon to think were their pupils), daily before our eyes! Indeed the hiſtory is painful to a feeling mind to relate, as it conſiſts of almoſt one continued ſcene of bungling and blunder. I ſhall confine myſelf to one inſtance more immediately under my eye, of a ſmall brig of ſixty tons burden, belonging to Aberdeen, that has attended the Highland loch fiſhings theſe three laſt ſeaſons, and in the moſt ſucceſsful one never brought home above ſixty barrels of herrings, and the laſt ſeaſon, not a ſingle bone. She draws a bounty of L. 90 Sterling; but this is far from compenſating the outfit, beſides tear and wear of the voyage; and, had the owners been poor men, muſt have occaſioned their ruin, as is frequently the caſe. This is no ſingular inſtance; for I could adduce ſeveral ſuch. When their mode of procedure, by fiſhing with ſmall open boats only, is conſidered, it need not be wondered at. It is the conſtant practice to go to ſome one or other of the lochs, where they lie lounging in expectation of the fiſh coming to their hands, or trifling away their time ſhifting from loch to loch in queſt of them, without daring to go boldly out to ſea in ſearch of the numerous ſhoals that ſurround the northern part of the iſland; which if they did, it is abſolutely impoſſible but their labours would be crowned with ſucceſs. Had the brig above condeſcended upon been equipped with what the Dutch call a *buſs-rope*, and the Yarmouth people a *horſe-rope*,

and

and proper buoys to float them by, (the whole expence of which would not have exceeded L. 30), and but one hand only, capable of inſtructing them in the proper manner of working them, I will affirm, ſhe needed not to have gone ten leagues from her own port to have made, not only one, but perhaps ſeveral cargoes; yet the owners are gentlemen of the moſt reſpectable characters, and ſome of them are as much engaged in fiſhing-matters as moſt upon the eaſtern coaſt. This is mentioned from no motives of diſreſpect, but to ſhew the prevalence of bad practices, and how difficult it is for men of the beſt ſenſe to deviate from the common jog-trot beaten path. At the time this veſſel ſailed for the Highlands, there was a Dutch buſs fiſhing very ſucceſsfully within ſight of this town; and the herrings had been ſwarming upon the coaſt (as they do every ſeaſon) in ſuch amazing ſhoals, that, as our fiſhermen declare, they would at times think it abſolutely impoſſible to get through them, until the plaſhing of their oars makes them dive about their boats, and this cloſe in with the land, and not ſeldom into the very harbour; notwithſtanding which, ſo infatuatedly ignorant are we in general of the matter, and ſo perverſely obſtinate in rejecting information, that ninety-nine of the hundred to whom this was told, laughed at the narrator, as if he had been relating an idle fiction, and endeavoured to turn every attempt

tempt that was made to awaken the attention of the neighbourhood to the ſubject, into ridicule.

In no much better ſituation is our cod-fiſhery than the herring-fiſhery, though it muſt be allowed our fiſhermen upon the eaſt coaſt are very dextrous boat-fiſhers. The Dutch doggers have long wrought the *long line*, without ſo much as the aſſiſtance of a boat, which is expreſsly prohibited to them as well as their herring-buſſes; from them the Engliſh cod-ſmacks (who always fiſhed with hand-lines till within theſe few years) learned the method, and outdo them; for, being permitted the uſe of a boat, they in calm weather, when there is not wind ſufficient to work the veſſel, with their boat under-run their lines, (as they expreſs it); that is, take the fiſh off the hooks, bait them at ſame time, and down with the line again. The complement of theſe ſmacks and doggers are from ſeven to eight and nine hands, conſiſting of the maſter, mate, and one or two ſeamen, the reſt apprentice-lads; while we, if a fiſhing adventure is intended, have no idea of any other method than boat-fiſhing only. For a ſmall ſloop, perhaps of forty or fifty tons burden, two fiſhing-boats muſt be bought, and two crews, of ſix men each, are engaged; and it is rare, if theſe do not require a few boys to catch bait in the ſloop's boat forſooth; and not ſeldom a ſupercargo, beſide the maſter: and thus a very ſmall adventure is clogged with the maintenance and wages of from ſixteen to eighteen

eighteen hands, whereby the profits are deſtroyed. Thus, by our abſurd management, both in the herring and cod fiſhery, the generality are perfectly diſguſted, and imagine the trade untenible. When the buſineſs comes to be better underſtood, (which I hope it will ſoon be), I will promiſe, that a ſmall ſloop of thirty tons burden, properly equipped, with from ſeven to eight or nine hands, moſt of them apprentices, will do more buſineſs than moſt veſſels that go upon the preſent plan, at much leſs than half the expence, and greater certainty of ſucceſs; for ſhe can keep the ſea when boats dare not, and can fiſh with hand-lines when the weather will not permit working the long line.

The Peterhead people have been the moſt ſucceſsful adventurers I have heard of, that have attempted the Highland cod-fiſhing from the eaſt coaſt. To me it appears ſtrange, that they ſhould devote their whole attention to a diſtant fiſhery, with ſuch very fine fiſhing ground juſt at their doors; the value of which, from the Buchan-neſs, acroſs the mouth of the Murray frith, and round the Orkneys and Shetland iſles, is but little known. Were the quantity of fiſh properly aſcertained, that are taken by ſmall boats from two to three tons burden, from the Buchan-neſs to Speymouth, partly ſent to London in barrelled cod, and partly dried, and ſold to the ſouthward, and in the country, taken upon the ſkirts of this fiſh-

ing ground, it would be found much more than can be well imagined; and yet ſo prolific is it, that I am perſuaded, by a proper mode of fiſhing in ſmall decked veſſels, that could go out to and keep the ſea, the quantity might be increaſed an hundred fold.

When the herrings ſet into the lochs, or cloſe in with the land, no doubt much may be done with open boats; but how uncertain this is, fatal experience has convinced almoſt every adventurer. To evince which, I ſhall briefly relate the occurrences of two gentlemen here, who, with very laudable and perſevering induſtry, eſtabliſhed a fiſhery at *Staxago*, near *Wick* in *Caithneſs*, the only place upon the eaſtern coaſt where herrings are taken at preſent, excepting the mouth of the frith of Forth. For Mr Knox is miſinformed, when he ſays there is a herring-fiſhery along this coaſt. This certainly was the caſe in former times; but no argument can prevail upon our fiſhermen at this day to try it, although their proſpects are as flattering, at times, every ſeaſon, as they can poſſibly be any where. Theſe gentlemen, upon being informed by a perſon occaſionally reſiding here, upon whoſe veracity they could depend, that herrings, in great abundance, were known to frequent the coaſt of Caithneſs, were induced to ſend down caſks and ſalt, and engage boats to fiſh for them. This they did for ſeveral years, gradually encreaſing the number of boats; and formed a

permanent

permanent eſtabliſhment, erecting houſes for making red herrings, &c.; and their example was followed by others. In the midſt of their ſucceſs, they were reminded of the precarioufneſs of boat-fiſhing; the practice of the Dutch and Yarmouth people was held out to them; and, to convince them that this was the practice of our own countrymen when the trade was beſt underſtood, the book from which the foregoing extract is taken, *The Intereſt of Scotland*, was put into their hands. The advice, however, was rejected; and their error in doing ſo too ſoon appeared. They undoubtedly loſt more money than would have purchaſed a proper veſſel for their purpoſe: for in the ſeaſon 1779, when they had nine boats engaged at a very heavy certain expence, their fiſhing produced only fifty-ſix barrels of herrings; and from that time to the laſt ſeaſon, 1784, when the fiſh ſet in to the land again, not ſo much as a ſingle barrel; although they had certain notice from coaſting veſſels, that every one of theſe ſeaſons, the herrings were but a few miles off from the land, but too far for their ſmall boats to venture in the rapid tide-way that runs there.

From this and many other ſimilar failures I have heard of, I am perfectly convinced, that it is abſolutely impoſſible that ever the herring-fiſhing by boats can be made a national ſtaple branch, or a very profitable private one, as it certainly might be both, by a proper mode of fiſhing in the open

ſea with decked veſſels. I muſt therefore conclude, that were the people in the Highlands and iſlands to confine themſelves to pay more attention to the fiſheries moſt contiguous to their own habitations, for which their ſmall boats may be well enough adapted, it would be found much more for their intereſt, than ſeeking after the more diſtant; the difficulties and hardſhips they undergo in doing which are ſo pathetically deſcribed by Mr Knox.

As all theſe ſhores are ſaid to abound with fiſh of various kinds, particularly *cod*, *codlings*, *ling*, *tusk*, *ſkate*, *ſyths*, *haddocks*, &c. in their reſpective ſeaſons, and as they are to be had in the lochs and cloſe in with the land, much advantage might they derive from a vigorous proſecution of catching and properly curing them. I do by no means infer, that theſe boats ſhould neglect the herring-fiſhery; for they certainly ought always to have their nets in trim againſt the uſual ſeaſon of their arrival; but I would not have them loſe a ſingle day of the other fiſhing, until they had the moſt certain notice of their being at hand: when, if they have a proſpect of purchaſers, it will be their intereſt to give that branch the preference. It will be ſaid, where are they to find purchaſers, unleſs they go to the general rendezvous where purchaſers uſually reſort? Theſe purchaſers conſiſt of people who attend the fiſhery in veſſels loaded with caſks and ſalt, who buy the freſh herrings,

and

and pack them in their own caſks. (If the bounty-veſſels purchaſe herrings of the country-boats, it is contrary to law). What a precarious adventure it is, to ſend veſſels upon this uncertain fiſhing, almoſt every ſeaſon ſhows; and no ſmall ſum is annually loſt to the nation in wages, tear and wear of theſe veſſels, &c. In the preſent ſituation of things, the objection muſt be allowed to hold good; but I think it is poſſible to be obviated, and theſe veſſels remain at home, or be otherwiſe employed, until a certainty of their procuring cargoes is aſcertained: for I have every reaſon to ſuppoſe I could cure herrings as well in a clay-pit, or any other receptacle fit to retain a liquid, as in the beſt caſk. I know that pilchards (a ſimilar fiſh) are cured at Falmouth and that neighbourhood, in bings of many thouſand barrels on the warehouſe floors, and are only put into barrels immediately before ſhipping off; and I can ſee no reaſonable objection why, in caſe of neceſſity, (which muſt frequently happen in the Highlands in good fiſhing ſeaſons, for caſks are an expenſive and periſhable article, and can only be kept in ſafety where the warehouſes are large), herrings may not be cured in nearly the ſame manner.

I am told lime and ſtones are very plenty in the iſlands, and along the weſt coaſt. Were the public, or the proprietors along the coaſt, to erect ciſterns either above or below the ſurface of the ground, and keep a proper ſtock of ſalt in them,

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at the moſt noted fiſhing ſtations, herrings in great quantities might not only be cured, but retained for any reaſonable length of time in perfect ſafety, until veſſels arrive with caſks and a freſh ſupply of ſalt. An experiment to aſcertain the practicability of this, may be made at a very trifling expence. If it anſwer, of which I cannot entertain a doubt, a little experience will lead to the propereſt method of conſtructing them. I apprehend it will be beſt not to have them large; or if erected large, they ſhould have many partitions; for this reaſon, that after the fiſh have lain a ſufficient time to pine, or thoroughly imbibe the ſalt, they ought to be ſhifted from one ciſtern to another, to ſeparate the bloody pickle from them, that it may be boiled up and put about them again, with an additional quantity, completely to cover the fiſh; in which ſituation they will purify themſelves, by throwing up the oil upon the ſurface, to be ſcummed off; particularly if the ciſterns are covered in with a ſhed-roof declining to the ſun, the heat, in the ſummer fiſhing ſeaſon, will be increaſed, and reverberate, ſo as to make the oil riſe plentifully, in the ſeparation of which, and the raw blood, conſiſts the principal merit of Dutch curing; whereby the fiſh are rendered fitter to keep in any climate, particularly warm ones, where, for want of theſe precautions, they ſoon guild and ſpoil. In theſe ciſterns, the fiſh of many different adventurers may be cured promiſcuouſly, as they can be meaſured

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in by the crane or barrel, and accounted for at the general average of the whole produce, paying proportionally for ſalt expended, as well as for trouble, and at a reaſonable rate for ciſtern-dues.

Were this practice fairly eſtabliſhed round the coaſt, it would be found, in my humble opinion, a far more effectual method to make the Dutch and other nations drop the trade, than by inſultingly driving them to a diſtance, as many ſeem to expect and wiſh for; becauſe, if we follow out the buſineſs with that ſpirit the ſubject deſerves, in decked veſſels, we may have it in our power to underſell almoſt all others.

The contents of a ciſtern fourteen feet ſquare by one deep, is nearly forty barrels; conſequently ſix feet deep, above 230 barrels. Should the quantity taken in any one ſeaſon ſo far exceed the conſumpt, as endanger the reduction of the price under a reaſonable rate, and policy dictate imitating the example of the Dutch in prohibiting the exportation of herrings a year old, by this method there would be no waſte of caſks, and little of ſalt; for, perhaps, the pickle will be found to increaſe in value the oftener it is boiled up; and a conſiderable part of the ſalt imbibed into the herrings may be recovered, by bruiſing and ſteeping them in ſalt water; and I have great reaſon to think, the quantity of oil that would be procured might go a great way in defraying the expence of catching and curing; for the Swedes have for ſeveral

ral years paſt caught herrings, when they were plenty upon the coaſt, for the expreſs purpoſe of boiling them to extract oil, although they have not ſucceeded in making pure oil. A friend of mine was tempted, ſome years ago, by the lowneſs of the price, to order ſome barrels of it, before he ſaw it. I told him he would find it unfit for ſale, (for I had heard of it); and he found it ſo. I do not mean to infer from this, that very pure oil may not be extracted in great quantities from herrings, by boiling them. The failure of the Swedes, I am perſuaded, proceeds from the quantity of viſcid matter produced by boiling the whole fiſh, without being at pains to ſeparate that properly from the oil, by pouring it upon, and waſhing it in water, when this viſcid matter would diſſolve, and leave the oil pure upon the ſurface: For I apprehend, that were the whole parts of a whale boiled in water, and what floated upon the ſurface ſcummed off, it would be found what Swediſh herring-oil is, or nearly ſo. This viſcid matter, that is the bane of Swediſh herring-oil, might be turned to valuable purpoſes, when properly ſeparated from the oil. It is the property of all animal ſubſtances, to yield this matter more or leſs, and fiſh in a high degree.

In a ſmall experiment I tried ſome years ago, I made a very ſtrong glue from the head and inteſtines of a cod, from which I am led to think, that if ever our fiſheries are carried to that extent they

they are capable of, their very offals may be turned to account; as from the *finer* kind of fiſh, with proper attention and care, *iſinglaſs* may be made; and from the *coarſer*, ſuch as dogfiſh, ſunfiſh, porpuſes, &c. a ſtrong glue, uſeful for joiners, woollen-weavers, painters, &c. &c.

In the climate of the Hebrides and Shetland, ſo adverſe to the culture of grain, and by the hand of Providence ſo abundantly compenſated with ſuch variety of the moſt valuable ſpecies of fiſh, (if they knew the proper value of them), that fiſhing is, and certainly ought to be eſteemed their proper harveſt; how uſeful would theſe ciſterns be, with a proper ſupply of fiſh in them? they could never ſo ſeverely feel the failure of their at beſt but ſcanty crops, that frequently happens. Habit has inured them to live upon a very ſmall proportion of oat-meal, to what is uſed in other parts of the country, and moſtly made into *brochan* or water-gruel. What an agreeable reliſh would a well-cured herring make to this ſlop, if eat along with it, as the Norwegians do along with their broth and ſoups! How ſimple an affair would it be, for each iſland, pariſh, or even family, to have one for their particular uſe, proportioned to their numbers?

It is the prevailing opinion, that herrings cannot be well cured, unleſs gutted and barrelled immediately when taken. I muſt beg leave to differ, if they get ſalt directly, and I will give my

reaſon. I have talked over the matter with ſundry old and experienced Yarmouth fiſhers, whoſe conſtant practice is to falt their fiſh in bulk in their holds, for making into red herrings, without gutting them; and although they will frequently have them on board from one to two and three weeks or more, and that without preſerving the pickle about them, every drop of which is pumped out, they will deliver them on ſhore perfectly ſound and in good condition, though no doubt at a conſiderable waſte of ſalt; were they not ſo, I ſuſpect the moderate degree of heat at firſt applied to them, would increaſe, rather than check putrefaction. This leads me to think, that they may be cured in bulk, on board ſhips, with perfect ſafety, particulary if the ceiling and partitions of the apartments appropriated for holding them, is caulked tight, which is very practicable; and whereby the bloody pickle would be preſerved, and no ſalt waſted. If this opinion is formed with judgement, it would certainly be a great ſaving of trouble, to delay doing that on board, which could be done much more conveniently on ſhore.

It is impoſſible to ſay, the quantity of herrings that might be landed by a veſſel properly equipped for fiſhing upon our coaſts through the ſeaſon. I have reaſon to think it would be, at times, at the rate of ſeveral cargoes a-week. An experiment to aſcertain this would coſt but little; and it certainly would be well beſtowed, if it is found to anſwer.

anſwer. An inveſtigation of the merit of bloody pickle, which the Dutch ſo carefully preſerve, will ſhow it to be a glutinous ſubſtance, with which nature ſupplies herrings in water, and which it appears experience has found uſeful to preſerve them from the action of air. Lord Dundonald, whoſe labours I admire, (particularly his method of refining ſalt, which I hope will not be neglected and loſt), has given a method for increaſing this matter in the pickle, by bruiſing and mixing therein a certain proportion of the milt: With humble deference, I will propoſe another, and that is, to boil a proportion of the gills and guts, or a few of the ſmalleſt or damaged herrings, and mix the liquor with the pickle, after being ſtrained through a hair or woollen cloth. This, I am certain, will give all that boiled blood and ſlime can be ſuppoſed to yield.

I have long thought the practice of curing herrings in ſmoke, *red herrings*, as they are called, might be improved upon. I know the method originated with the Norwegians, perhaps from neceſſity. It is undoubtedly a very ſlovenly one, although implicitly followed at Yarmouth and elſewhere. I do not apprehend they can derive any very ſalutary advantage from ſmoke, farther than being dry, and leſs ſalt than when pickled; on the contrary, it is known that ſmoke-cured meat of any kind is found hurtful to many conſtitutions; notwithſtanding which, herrings cured in this manner always ſell higher, and find a rea-

dier vend, at moſt markets, than the pickled kind: wherefore I would beg leave to recommend making an experiment, of curing them ſweet ſalted, or *rouzed*, as they call it, and dried in houſes heated with a ſtove and flue, without ſmoke. I am convinced this would be a leſs expenſive method than reddening, which requires a fire of wood, as any feuel will ſerve; and I cannot help thinking the fiſh would be found more palatable, by retaining their native colour and flavour.

The Norwegians are, it appears, moſt induſtrious fiſhers; they not only eſtabliſhed and taught (as above obſerved) the making of red herrings, but have for ages practiſed, and ſtill retain, the ſtock-fiſh trade; and we, as well as all the other European powers, particularly the maritime ones, purchaſe great quantities for ſea-ſervice, where, in long voyages, they are found very uſeful for a freſh meal. From an experiment I made ſome years ſince, I have reaſon to think the making of them is by far the ſhorteſt, ſimpleſt, and cheapeſt method of curing fiſh; as it conſiſts of no more than gutting, waſhing, and hanging up to dry, in houſes heated with a ſtove, juſt ſuch as is recommended for drying herrings without ſmoke. They may be dried in a very ſhort ſpace, according to the degree of heat applied, to be regulated by experience, as a very quick or more deliberate degree of heat is found to ſuit beſt.

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The introduction of theſe ſtoves into the Highlands and iſles cannot fail to be of vaſt importance, where, for want of ſunſhine and dry air, much fiſh is annually hurt in curing, and in ſome inſtances are rotten and loſt. In theſe, fiſh may be cured for any market, as they may be made into ſtock-fiſh without any ſalt, or made into the common ſplit kind, with much leſs ſalt than is commonly uſed, dried thoroughly hard, perfectly clean and tranſparent, and that through the whole winter, when cod, codlings, ſyths, haddocks, &c. are in good caſe. At preſent few codlings, and no haddocks or ſeiths, are taken, but for home conſumpt, and almoſt immediate uſe; although the Norwegians ſell vaſt quantities of all theſe, made into ſmall ſtock-fiſh, through Germany, and all the ports of the Baltic, under the denomination of *dorek*. I have ſeen and eat of them in Aberdeen, and am told the current price in Norway, that poor country, is from three ſhillings to three ſhillings and ſixpence the weigh of thirty-ſix pounds, or about a penny Sterling per lb. Of that kind I know many tuns might annually be made round the ſhores of the Moray frith only; in many places of which, purchaſers would be courted to take them at the rate of fourteen for a penny. Theſe, when dry, will weigh from four ounces to ſeveral pounds weight each; from which it is obvious what great advantage might be derived from that branch, even if a more liberal price were given for

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wet fiſh. In fact, the advantages of theſe ſtoves, if fairly introduced and put in practice, are manifold and great, as every ſpecies of commonly eatable fiſh may be dried in them for ſome market or other.

At the fiſhing towns, and intended fiſhing ſtations, where a reſort of fiſh and fiſhers may be expected, they ſhould be conſtructed upon a large ſcale, ſimilar to the Yarmouth red-herring houſes, divided into ſeparate apartments, and furniſhed with both fixed and moveable laths of wood, from the top to nearly the bottom, for ſuſpending the fiſh upon, with a caſt-metal ſtove in each apartment, from which the ſmoke muſt be carried off by a flue, either running perpendicular, or carried round the rooms, which, by prolonging the circulation, would increaſe the heat. In theſe the fiſh of many different adventurers may alſo be dried at the ſame time, at a very moderate charge, every perſon giving his fiſh a particular mark, either by a peculiar notch, or thread of any colour tied to them. The erection of theſe large ſtoves will no doubt be attended with expence; but they may be conſtructed upon ſo ſimple and ſmall a ſcale, that every boat's crew, who can afford to build a ſmall hut, and purchaſe a ſmall metal ſtove, or even a caſt-metal plate of three feet ſquare, may have one for their own accommodation, and cure their fiſh in them upon ropes of hemp,

hemp, hair, bent, or heath, ſtretched acroſs, as effectually as in the moſt expenſive ones.

Cod-fiſhing veſſels that have wells, can eaſily preſerve their ſmall fiſh for bait freſh and alive, which thoſe that have not cannot do; the want of which is very much felt in ſome parts of the Highlands at particular ſeaſons, where ſmall fiſh is ill to be got, and ſoon ſpoil for want of a little contrivance. I think a frame of good ſtrong hoop-ſticks, or little better, in the ſhape of a ſmall boat, with a piece of coarſe thin cloth laid over it, would anſwer the purpoſe perfectly well; it would retain the fiſh, and, by admitting a free circulation of water, would preſerve them alive till wanted. Theſe may be towed aſtern, or along ſide, by means of a projecting boom from the lee-ſide, as may be found moſt convenient to circumſtances and the working of the veſſel. They may be conſtructed larger or ſmaller, ſo as to be put together or taken down in a few minutes, and will be ſo light, that a ſingle man may take them on board, when the ſeverity of the weather, or other circumſtances, may require it. Should the light frame be found not ſufficiently buoyant, a few pieces of cork might be laid in the inſide of the cloth, to make them float lighter. Indeed, could fiſhers be prevailed upon to do as their forefathers did, and uſe ſmall nets for catching bait, I apprehend they would find their account in it, as a few ſtraggling herrings are to be found, at all ſeaſons, in the north ſea; and

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no bait anſwers better than them. As the hardeſt and moſt rocky ground is always eſteemed the beſt fiſhing ground, I think it cannot miſs, that in uſing the long line, as the whole hooks lie at the bottom, many of them muſt lie at the ſide of ſtones, and in hollows, where it is impoſſible for a fiſh to get a fair bite, whereby the chance of ſucceſs is loſt; and as, in fiſhing with the hand-line, it is a rule, never to let the hook touch the bottom, though a few inches only diſtant from it, and the more it is kept in motion, the better; I have thought, that if the hooks upon the long line could be prevented from touching the bottom alſo, it would be an improvement. And that it is practicable to do ſo, I cannot help entertaining a hope. Suppoſe a ſmall bit of light wood or cork is fixed upon the ſnood, a few inches diſtant from the end of the hook, juſt ſufficiently light to prevent the hook and bait from going to the bottom, but not to raiſe the line from it; the agitation of the water, either from the action of wind or current of tide, will keep the ſuſpended hook in a continued vibrating motion, and thereby not only make an excellent decoy, ſimilar to the motion of the hand in the hand-line, but give every chance for a fair and ſure bite.

Indeed, were fiſhing matters more attended to, and men of genius applying to it, it is impoſſible to ſay to what length improvements may be carried. Mr George Tower here has a net by him that

that closes at the ends when shot in a circular manner, and draws at the bottom like a purse, which, if made large enough, and used where herrings are plenty, may be supposed to inclose a whole cargo at a single haul. And I have had by me nearly these seven years, the model of a net of my own invention, by which, if put in use where the shoals are thick, I am persuaded it would be practicable to make cargoes as fast as they could be taken on board and cured. By repeatedly revolving in my mind the manner of constructing it, I have simplified it so, that it may be made, with its few apparatus, from two to three guineas, according to the size. It will be so portable, that a boy may carry it, and occupy very little room; and it will be so easily wrought, that, although capacious enough to contain from twenty to fifty, or even a hundred barrels at one haul, two or three men may work it, either in ship or boat, and that so quickly, that from five to ten minutes will be sufficient time to the haul from any reasonable depth that herrings are usually taken in. It goes down into the water in very little room, suspended by one rope, and when hauled upon by another, comes up, occupying a considerable space, from three to twelve or fourteen feet square. Upon a successful haul, it is to be suspended alongside, the edge of the net just above the surface of the water, where the fish are retained alive, as in a well, until taken on board by means of a bucket of net-work, with a long handle, similar to a shrimp-

net, and this repeated (for it is workable in any weather that is not very tempeſtuous) until the cargo is completed. This net may be uſeful for other purpoſes beſide herring-fiſhing. The dog-fiſhery is very valuable, on account of their livers, which produce much oil. They are a voracious fearleſs fiſh, and may, by means of bait ſuſpended over the mouth of the net, be amuſed until brought to the ſurface in great quantities. I have ſeen ſalmon and trout taken by means of a light, in the night-time, upon which they run, until ſtruck with a ſpear. If this net be let down, and a light held out immediately above it, I muſt ſuppoſe fiſh of various kinds may be decoyed, until brought to the ſurface and taken.

Although the Dutch, who have a long voyage to the fiſhing ſtation, uſe large expenſive veſſels, perhaps ſmaller ones may be found ſuitable enough to our purpoſe, who are ſituated ſo near to the fiſhing-ground, particularly if herrings can be ſafely cured in bulk. It muſt be of moment to any country, particularly a poor one, to have matters conducted upon the leaſt poſſible original outfit-expence. Of all the veſſels I have ſeen, the rigging of a Flemiſh fiſhing-boat ſeems the ſimpleſt, cheapeſt, and at ſame time muſt be extremely well calculated for fiſhing. Theſe are about thirty tons burden, cloſe decked, and conſiſt of one proper maſt, upon which a pretty large lug-ſail is ſet, and in eaſy weather a top ſail above it, with a ſhort ſpar in the bow as a fore-maſt, upon which a

ſmall lug fore-ſail is ſet. Inſtead of expenſive ſhrouds to reſiſt the labouring jerks of a weighty boom, nothing is needed but a ſimple tackle on each ſide, ſtanding pretty much aft, with a ſtay and main haulyard, which compoſe their whole rigging. I am told they lie as cloſe to the wind as any cutter, conſequently ſail faſt, and labour little in a hollow ſea; for there is no boltſprit, and the ſails are wholly within board. The only objection I have heard to them, is the loſs of time in ſhifting the lug to windward in turning, on which account they are ſaid to be leſs handy than a ſloop or ſmack in turning through a narrow fair-way. Upon ſeeing one of them laſt ſummer in our harbour, I could not help being ſtruck with her ſimplicity of rigging, and my fancy went to work in trying to obviate this one objection. If it is poſſible to do in large what I have done in a ſmall model, I have accompliſhed my aim, and am pretty confident the lug may be ſhifted in the common time requiſite to put the veſſel about, without lowering the yard a foot.

I know not what ſyſtem is like to be adopted by the gentlemen ſo laudably employed in the intereſt of this valuable buſineſs; perhaps it would be prudent not to be too precipitate, until full information is obtained upon a ſubject ſo little underſtood, or at leaſt to leave it open, that, as information occurs, it may be occaſionally introduced, until the plan is complete, which muſt be a work of time. If government can be prevailed

upon to adopt Dr Anderſon's and Mr Knox's ideas, and erect the villages or towns recommended, along the Highland coaſt, it could not fail to be of great importance to the inhabitants there, as well as every adventurer in the fiſhing way that may frequent that coaſt. It is to be hoped the preſent bounty will be continued, and every cuſtomhouſe will be allowed to admit veſſels properly equipped for fiſhing, upon the bounty, without ſubjecting them to the neceſſity of going to diſtant ports to rendezvous. The oppreſſive fees exacted from bounty-veſſels by the cuſtomhouſe-officers, and the troubleſome affair of tranſacting ſalt-bonds, are matters ſo loudly complained of, and ſo ſeverely felt, that it muſt be ſuppoſed they will be taken into ſerious conſideration, and prevented in future. The abſurd prohibition of uſing hand-lines for catching cod, ſhould not only be done away, but a premium given for the greateſt quantity taken by the crews, when not otherwiſe employed; and all herrings, either exported, or ſold for home-conſumpt, ought to be properly cured. This is a meaſure which will be objected to by intereſted individuals as expenſive; but it muſt be enforced, before we can pretend to competition in foreign markets, or make an extenſive home-conſumpt. At preſent their appearance is nauſeating. Perhaps it would be proper not to leave future adventurers upon the bounty ſo much in their own option in the manner of uſing their nets; and that the buſs or horſe-

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rope, and proper buoys for floating a fleet of nets by, ſhould be expreſsly ſtipulated as articles in the equipment, wherewith they can uſe them in the open ſea; but unfortunately, if this is all at once rigidly enforced, we are perfectly ignorant of this mode of fiſhing. True, it muſt be ſimple, and might be eaſily acquired by men of ſenſe, acquainted with boat-fiſhing. We may ſuppoſe a few hands might ſoon train a fleet, by exerciſing the crews in ſhooting and hauling the nets in day-light, a few days. But this would be rather precarious and troubleſome; and yet, as it is a meaſure that muſt abſolutely be adopted before the fiſhery can be put upon any thing like a proper footing, men for inſtructors we muſt have, either from Yarmouth or Holland I muſt conclude, as eſſential a ſervice as government can do, would be to invite home, by encouragement, many hundred Britiſh ſeamen, that are always employed in the Dutch fiſhery, where they muſt have acquired knowledge that would be highly uſeful to us in our preſent ſituation. The want of ſuch men is ſo ſeverely felt at preſent, that, as far as I can learn, along all the northern coaſt of Scotland, although we have many good and hardy ſeamen, yet not one of them is capable of conducting the fiſhing, either of cod or herring, upon the true principles on which it ought to be done; and to that ſolely muſt be attributed the preſent deplorable ſituation of our fiſheries. It is ſuch, that he is a

hardy man indeed that dares to recommend a fiſhing adventure. Should he be actuated by principles of the utmoſt poſſible purity, and were his plans ever ſo well digeſted and rational, until men are either procured, or bred by perſeverance, capable to put theſe in execution, ſucceſs is very precarious, and almoſt in vain to be looked for; and on the want of it the certainty of reflections and ridicule is ſufficient to deter others from ſubjecting themſelves to the ſame laſh.

I have reaſon to think there is much fine fiſhing-ground to the north and weſt of the *Lewis* and *Harris*, round the iſlands of *St Kilda*, &c. I have heard of becalmed veſſels taking vaſt quantities of fine cod with the hand-line there; and of an Iriſh wherry (which works the long-line with the veſſel in the manner of the Dutch) having, in a ſhort while, in ſummer 1782, taken what made two cargoes of dry fiſh, upon ground where the inhabitants there had never taken a ſingle fiſh: Wherefore I would beg leave to recommend, that government cauſe explore all the fiſhing-banks round the north part of the iſland, and get a new ſet of charts (with theſe marked upon them) made, and ſold to the public upon eaſy terms.

Were it poſſible to form a PUBLIC COMPANY, that could be conducted upon truly patriotic principles, not veſted with excluſive privileges obſtructive of the operations of private adventurers, but, on the contrary, having extenſive funds to lay in

a proper ſtock of ſalt and caſks, as well as other fiſhing materials, at ſundry ſtations, from whence they could be ſupplied upon liberal principles, and reaſonable terms, either for money, or in barter for well-cured fiſh, or properly-made oil, they might be highly uſeful, at leaſt for a few years, until the buſineſs is better underſtood. Their ſervice, by admitting ſeamen properly recommended for diligence and honeſty, might form a kind of ſchool, from whence the private adventurer could be furniſhed with men worthy of being intruſted with the execution of his plans; and if they ſupported an extenſive correſpondence with the European and Weſt-Indian markets, and readily communicated their information, it would be of great importance to every one engaged in the trade, to be regularly informed of the quantity and quality ſuitable for theſe markets.

My ſubject has led me to ſay more than I intended when I began although I could ſay much more. I will conclude for the preſent, with obſerving, that unleſs a better ſyſtem of fiſhing is adopted, it is a doubtful point with me, if it were not for the intereſt of the nation to drop the buſineſs, except for home uſe. Were the value of fiſh exported for theſe twenty years back properly aſcertained, and counterbalanced with the outfit of all adventures, in wear and tear of ſhips and boats, wages and victuals, with bounty added, I am convinced it be would found far to outweigh the other.

I will therefore beg leave to aſk, whether theſe men, who have been bungling at the buſineſs, without aiming at improvement to fiſh in the manner of the Dutch and Yarmouth people, have been the friends of their country or not? I will again repeat what I think I am warranted to ſay, that our anceſtors underſtood and proſecuted the fiſhing upon true principles, at a very diſtant and early period. Mr Loch ſays, the tradition of the country at Dunbar reports, that perſons went from thence to teach the Yarmouth people the making of red herrings, which had been much proſecuted on both ſides of the frith. Perhaps theſe people were carried there at the time Edward I. over-ran this country; and we were induced, either from want of a ſufficient quantity of proper fire-wood for making red-herrings, or rather from the application of reaſon and common ſenſe, to make barrelled herrings, for ſeveral ages before the reign of King Charles I. and before I can hear of their being made by any other nation.

I have two Swediſh memorials by me, wrote in 1746 and 1747, with the intent (which they effectually had) of rouſing the attention of the Swedes to this buſineſs; from which I will beg leave to ſubjoin a note, that will ſhow to what good purpoſe foreigners have uſed the neglected writings of our own countrymen, and what value the Swedes put upon the privilege of fiſhing in

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our ſeas *. This author traces and attributes the decline of Norwegian red-herring trade, to the Dutch having learnt, about two hundred years before the time he wrote, from an Engliſhman named

* Not above two hundred years ago, the Duch learnt of an Engliſhman, named William Belkinſon, the manner of dreſſing, ſalting, and barrelling herrings: He at ſame time taught them how to take and ſalt cod upon the ſea-coaſt; and this art laid the foundation of the wealth and power of that republic. Sir Walter Raleigh, after having been at great pains to learn the true ſtrength the Dutch acquired by this advantageous trade, aſſured James I. King of England, that they fiſhed upon the coaſt of Great Britain with at leaſt 3000 veſſels, and 50,000 men, excluſive of the veſſels which they fitted out and employed yearly in exporting their herrings to other countries, which, according to him, amounted at leaſt to 9000 veſſels, containing 150,000. He added, that 20 buſſes for herrings were ſufficient for the maintenance of 8000 ſouls, comprehending women and children; and that the Dutch, at a moderate computation, had annually 20,000 veſſels at ſea, for the ſole article of fiſhing, in its different branches.

Mr d'Aibzema, reſident from the Hans Towns at the Hague, and Hiſtoriographer of the United Provinces, as well as the celebrated Du Moulin, (*Commentarius de lege mercatoria*), certify, that in their time the Dutch drew from the ſea yearly 300,000 tuns of herrings and other fiſh. This Dutch fiſhery, which may be termed the great gold mine of that nation, was at leaſt tripled from the reign of James I. of England to that of Charles II. Dr Benjamin Worſely, who, under this laſt, acted as Secretary of State for the department of Trade and Plantations,

med William Belkinſon, the manner of catching, ſalting, and barrelling herrings; who alſo taught them the manner of catching and curing cod-fiſh. Now, as it is notorious the Scots were maſters of the

was ſent to Holland about the 1667, to inform himſelf exactly of the fiſhery which the Dutch carried on in the North Sea; and at his return, made a report to the King, in which he aſſures him, that at the loweſt valuation, the herring fiſhery of the Dutch amounted yearly to three millions Sterling. The reality of this eſtimate he demonſtrated, firſt, by the number of buſſes, which then amounted to at leaſt 1600; 2dly, by the quantity of fiſh taken by each veſſel; 3dly, by the cuſtomhouſe books of Holland, Zealand, and Friezland; 4thly, by the price of fiſh fixed in every place to which they were ſent by the Dutch. He pretended, that the value of herring and cod yearly taken by the Dutch, greatly exceeded the produce of the manufactures either of France or England, and even amounted to a much larger ſum than that which Spain draws from America in time of peace. He obſerved, that Holland had at all times regarded the fiſhery in the North Sea as the baſis of its wealth and power; and with this view had ſucceſſively publiſhed above thirty excellent regulations, for encouraging their ſubjects to proſecute this buſineſs with ardour, and put it upon a ſtable footing, that ſhould be advantageous to thoſe concerned in it. He demonſtrated, by a fair and juſt calculation, that L. 10,000 Sterling employed in the herring fiſhing, maintained more people than L. 50,000 Sterling in any other branch of commerce; that one buſs bred at leaſt ten ſailors, conſequently 1600 furniſhed a great number annually. And, finally, he obſerved, that the moſt famous Dutch Admirals, and their braveſt ſea-

the buſineſs at this period, and I cannot learn it was ſo in England, I may conclude this man who taught the Dutch has been from Scotland, probably of the name of Wilkinſon. Whether this conjecture

ſea-officers, had been at firſt no other than fiſhermen. The illuſtrious Mr De Witt, Grand Penſionary of Holland, publiſhed, in the year 1662, his excellent work of the Fundamental Maxims of the Republic of Holland; and that great politician, in calculating the number of people, which at that time amounted to 2,400,000 ſouls, and ſpeaking of the means by which they were ſubſiſted, adds, that 750,000 lived by the fiſhery alone, in which a great many acquired immenſe riches. Have we not reaſon then to call this fiſhery a real gold mine? It is certainly to them the baſis of a vaſt navigation and trade, that extends over the whole habitable globe.

The author then enumerates the different markets where the Dutch ſell their fiſh, either for money or in barter, with a variety of other arguments and uſeful information, holding out their induſtry to his countrymen as an example worthy of their imitation, (as every Britiſh ſubject who writes upon the matter ought to do to his). He ſays, the Norwegians taught the Engliſh the method of making red herrings, which is now very much practiſed at Yarmouth, from whence many ſhip-loads are annually exported to the Mediterranean: indeed, it is the chief trade of that town, which, by this branch, is become much larger than Gottenburg. Charles Guſtavus, one of our greateſt Kings, reſolved in good earneſt to ſhare in this gold mine of the Dutch. In the alliance which, in 1656, he made with England during Cromwell's uſurpation, there was ſtipulated a very advantageous article for Sweden, touching the liberty of fiſhing

jecture is well founded or not, is of little moment at this day; it would be of infinitely more, could we be prevailed upon to imitate their induſtry, and by a vigorous exertion to make a better uſe of our future time. That we may do ſo, is the fervent wiſh of a

CALEDONIAN FISHER.

ABERDEEN,
December 1784.

on the coaſt of England. Now, as we have had no open war with that kingdom ſince that time, the alliance ought ſtill to be in full vigour. Theſe are the very words of the tenth article:

"The ſubjects of his Swediſh Majeſty ſhall be at full "liberty to fiſh upon the coaſts and ſeas depending upon "the republic, for herrings and other fiſh, provided "the number of their buſſes ſhall not exceed 1000. Du-"ring their fiſhing, they ſhall not be moleſted in any "manner, either by the ſhips of war or privateers be-"longing to the republic; nor ſhall any tax or toll be "exacted from thoſe who ſhall fiſh upon the northern "coaſt of England, but they ſhall have free liberty to "buy neceſſary proviſions from the inhabitants of thoſe "places."

Have we not reaſon to aſk Sweden, What ſhe has been thinking of for almoſt a whole century, that ſhe has not profited by ſuch a conſiderable advantage which that great King procured for his country?

And have not I infinitely greater reaſon to aſk Britiſh ſubjects, What they have been thinking about, in ſo long neglecting a treaſure that almoſt every other nation prizes ſo much?

SUP-

SUPPLEMENT.

THE late Smuggling Act merits ſome conſideration. By it no clinker-bottomed veſſels muſt be built, nor any rigged with lugſails: Now, it is notorious, that clinker bottoms make the beſt ſailing ones. It muſt be allowed they are not ſo durable as carvel work; but they can be built cheaper; and for the weſt-coaſt fiſhing, where they will be moſtly afloat, they will anſwer well. The Yarmouth herring-fiſhers, (who are by far the beſt and moſt induſtrious in that line in our iſland), have always rigged their fiſhing veſſels with lugſails, which they find ſo peculiarly well adapted to the buſineſs, that many of the largeſt of them, that are occaſionally employed in the coaſting trade as ſloops and ſhallops, when the herring-ſeaſon commences, alter that rig, and never fiſh but with lugſails. As this is an inconteſtible fact, and as all our open fiſhing boats are rigged in that manner, I muſt conclude that it is beſt, and it certainly is the ſimpleſt and cheapeſt. Will it not therefore be found reaſonable to allow all veſſels that are *bona fide* equipped for the expreſs purpoſe of fiſhing, to be rigged in the manner

manner experience has found moſt convenient? And will not this prohibitory law prove prejudicial to the intereſt of the fiſhery, by being found extremely oppreſſive to many induſtrious individuals concerned in them?

No perſon can hold the principles of ſmuggling in more deteſtation than the author of this, or can more rejoice at every judicious meaſure that has or can be deviſed for its ſuppreſſion, and is only ſorry the framers of this act could not think of ſome other method for the diſpoſal of veſſels taken in that trade than breaking them up. If this law is rigidly enforced, I muſt conclude, that there will be, in the courſe of a few months, upwards of L. 100,000 value of ſhipping deſtroyed at the ſundry ports round the iſland, and loſt to the nation, without gaining one earthly real advantage. The thought of ſuch a deliberate and wanton waſte of valuable property, cannot fail to be extremely diſtreſſing to feeling minds. If the prices of ſmuggling articles ſhall continue ſo high as tempt the ſmuggler to perſevere; and if he cannot procure Britiſh veſſels, he will be at no loſs to procure foreign ones; for which, if they are alſo deſtroyed, he, or people connected with him, (Britiſh ſubjects), muſt pay; and thus, no inconſiderable proportion of ſhip-building, at our expence, will be thrown into the hands of foreigners. The law alſo ſerves as a very ſevere check upon the

the induſtry of the revenue-officers, as it leſſens the value of their prizes ſo much as hardly makes them worth the trouble of ſeizing. The beſt apology I can make for the framers of the law is, that too much ſympathy prevailed at cuſtomhouſe ſales, whereby the former owners readily recovered them, at a very moderate appretiate value, and they were returned to their former employ; for no bail was required that they ſhould be employed in the fair trade, which was certainly wrong.

If government is ſerious in their intention of giving effectual aid to the reſtoration of the fiſheries, the whole of theſe veſſels, inſtead of being deſtroyed, might be uſefully employed. They are in general conſtructed for faſt ſailing, and conſequently very well calculated for fiſhing. Were they ſold to people of integrity, under proper bond and penalty, at the uſually low valuation, to be employed in fiſhing, it might ſerve as a very great temptation to people to adventure in that line, that perhaps would not otherwiſe think of it; and thus a double advantage would be obtained, without any private loſs or public expence. Sorry am I to ſay it, that, notwithſtanding the example of our forefathers,—that of our more induſtrious neighbours daily at our doors,—and the well-meant endeavours of ſundry valuable performances, (particularly thoſe of Dr Anderſon and Mr Knox), recommending the proſecution of this buſineſs, ſuch

a liſtleſs indifference prevails, as occaſions the neceſſity of this and other advantages to be held out as a *ſtimulus* to people to do what, if done with judgement, could not fail to promote private emolument and public good.

FINIS.